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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**AMERICAN GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SAFE ENVIRONMENT CONDUCT POLICY**

**New York, February 15, 2018**— The American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) announced that it has developed an [AGPA Safe Environment Conduct Policy](#) as part of its efforts to provide a friendly, safe, respectful and welcoming environment for all, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, disability, age, appearance or other personal characteristics and socioeconomic status. This AGPA Safe Environment Conduct Policy outlines the organization’s expectations for all those who participate in AGPA. The policy includes a companion document that lays out a path if there is a grievance.

This policy will be widely publicized on the AGPA website [www.agpa.org](http://www.agpa.org), in materials distributed at AGPA Connect (the organization’s annual training event), on the official Meeting App and referenced at Plenary events to insure attendees are aware of the policy. Also as part of its commitment to a safe environment, AGPA is providing training for its volunteer leadership on Skills for Inclusive Leadership, and all faculty, the Tri-Organizational Boards and the Staff are required to participate in a diversity training prior to AGPA Connect in Houston.

“As a professional organization of group therapists with a diverse membership, AGPA is committed to increasing sensitivity to differences,” said Eleanor F. Counselman, EdD, CGP, LFAGPA, AGPA President. “The organization’s leadership wants to make sure our meeting and whole organization feel like a safe and welcoming place for all.”

This AGPA Safe Environment Conduct Policy is just the latest in a series of initiatives the organization has undertaken as part of its commitment to diversity and inclusivity. It has developed a [Statement on Inclusion](#); AGPA Connect’s program submission process included direct requests for Social Justice submissions; a menu of diversity offerings were developed in consultation with the organization’s Special Interest Groups for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Identities, and Racial and Ethnic Diversity; gender neutral bathrooms will be available at AGPA Connect in Houston; and gender neutral pronouns on badges will be an option. AGPA also has a YouTube video on [Cultural Competence in Group Therapy](#).

For more information on AGPA’s diversity initiatives or on group dynamics and process that promote inclusion and foster communication of diverse viewpoints, please contact AGPA at (877) 668-AGPA (2472) or via e-mail at [dfeirman@agpa.org](mailto:dfeirman@agpa.org). Experts on the topic are available.

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## *About AGPA*

The American Group Psychotherapy Association is the foremost professional association dedicated to the field of group psychotherapy, operating through a tri-partite structure: AGPA, a professional and educational organization; the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health, its philanthropic arm; and the International Board for Certification of Group Psychotherapists, a standard setting and certifying body. This multidisciplinary association has over 2,500 members, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, clinical mental health counselors, marriage and family therapists, pastoral counselors and creative arts therapists, many of whom have been recognized as specialists through the Certified Group Psychotherapist credential. The association has 21 local and regional societies located across the country. Its members are experienced mental health professionals who lead psychotherapy groups and various non-clinical groups. Many are organizational specialists who work with businesses, not-for-profit organizations, communities and other "natural" groups to help them improve their functioning.

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